Andrew Baumann: Hello, everybody. My name is Andrew Baumann. I’m the senior vice president at Global Strategy Group. And Wendy did set me up perfectly, so thank you very much. So, my firm is a public opinion, research and polling firm. And I want to talk today a little bit about how people like me can help people like you win some of the fight that you’re trying to fight to boost arts education and advocacy at various levels. So, what I do and what my firm does is we do public opinion research for all sorts of things. We do it for political candidates, we do it for foundations, we have some business clients, but we also do it a lot for advocacy organizations and that’s actually what I specialize in. And we get hired by folks and all sorts of spaces that are either trying to pass legislation or get-- convince the school board to pass something or regulations, or to fight against damaging ones. And we get hired to help with two of the different points within talking about today. And the main one, the one I’m going to spend the most time on, is the consistent and effective messaging. The second is sort of in helping build and manage coalitions.

So, we use surveys, focus groups, a lot of new online methodology and tools, social media listening, but we basically get hired to really understand what voters attitudes are about the issues that you care about. And sometimes not only voters, but elites, opinion makers, policymakers-- we do research at that level, too. And we do that kind of message testing that Wendy was just talking about. So, a group will come to us and say, “Well, this bill is before the legislature. We want to help get it passed. How do we convince voters that this is something they should support or not even support, but make phone calls to their legislatures to get behind?” So, we do a lot of work trying to help advocacy groups understand the best way to talk to voters and to elites to boost that kind of support and-or activism behind a policy or anything that you’re advocating for. The other thing we do that sort of works in the coalition front-- we do this a lot-- is we'll do polls that advocacy groups can take to policymakers to show them that their constituents care a lot about an issue and even more so to show them that they’re going to vote on that issue. So, I’m actually doing a poll right now for some environmental groups that they want to take the Congress to show some moderate Republican members of Congress that they should not include drilling in the Arctic Wildlife--National Wildlife Refuge as part of the tax bill. No, we’re doing a poll that sort of takes-- in their districts, very fair and balanced poll-- I hate using that terminology from Fox News, but that has a lot of credibility and we’re doing it with a Republican pollster on the side as a partner to boost that credibility. And they’re going to take it up to the Hill to policymakers and the idea is to say, “If you vote for this, you’re putting up your re-election in jeopardy.” So, it’s a little bit more of the stick in the carrot, but that can be an effective thing. And the other thing we do, that I mentioned before, a survey of teachers, we do that kind of survey work as well help understand how specialized constituents that play in important role in your policymaking, what their attitudes are and how to sort of bring them to the table, how to talk to them in order to bring that to the table. So, it’s just all about understanding the various audiences that you may talk to, be it voters, policymakers, constituents groups. You know, people like me can help you sort of understand how to more effectively talk to those folks. No, what I’m just going-- is take a couple minutes-- to do is to spend-- yeah, just to talk a little bit about the best practices from all of our experience and my experience working in this space. I’m going to admit I have not done a ton of research on art education, but I have some colleagues that have done a lot of work in the education space, a little bit on this, I’ve talked to them, and, so, hopefully, I’ll bring some of their expertise into this. But I apologize since it’s not my area of expertise. But I think that the learning that I have and that they have and that I have just from the advocacy world is pretty relevant to you as well. So, we just heard ninety percent of voters in New Jersey support-- think arts education is important. And that’s really good, but what’s important to note
here is that’s sort of in the abstract. You know, that’s when voters aren’t faced with a choice, right? And I think of what probably a lot of times you’re facing is people like arts education, but when it comes down to it is the school board or the legislature or whoever going to put their money where their mouth is or pass a standard and actually make this important. And when their choice is arts education versus property taxes or versus spending it on something else, then that ninety percent number can come down quite a bit. So, again, what we-- specialize in, you know, when you get into those specific fights how do you convince people that, yeah, it is worth it, it is worth investing in arts education over whatever else people are sort of deciding between. And, you know, a couple best practices in that sort of messaging is, first of all, you know, decide on the message and stick to it. So, this is about consistent and effective messaging. That is really important and I think is something that the advocacy groups often-- it’s very simple, but is often overlooked. You’ll think that you have five or six different talking points that you want to get across and you want to try to sort of make all of them to everybody; don’t do that. Get your best one or two and just hammer that over and over and over again. It makes your message repeat-- you get bored of it, but the people you’re talking to it actually breaks through all the clutter in their lives and that's just sort of a fundamental messaging point that’s really good. The question is how do you figure out what that message is. And, so, obviously, that’s where someone like me could come into play. Hearing what I think Arizona has done with their message triangle, I’ve assumed is something they-- they used someone like us. If you can’t do that, you can’t afford that, you don’t have the resources, then steal that from Arizona, from other folks that have done it. Better to do it in your own place, because Arizona is different than New Jersey, but, you know, use what’s out there, use-- don’t just-- you got to go with your gut. I’m sure your gut is good, but there’s data out there and us that as you can. And the other thing that seems so simple, but so many people particularly on the progressive side of the aisle, my clients a lot of them, always forget is when you’re talking to voters always bring it back to them. It’s not about you. It’s about them and their lives. And, so, you need to talk about messages and use messages that are relevant in their everyday concerns. It can’t be abstract, it can’t be big. And, so, when it comes to education, it’s all about what’s best for the student, okay? When it comes to arts education or anything else, it’s about how does my kid the most benefit out of them going to school, right? And, so, when I think about arts education I think about some of the things that--actually the messaging that you were talking about in terms of, Wendy, today’s art student, tomorrow’s whatever. So, the idea that arts education is essential to building a well-rounded kid and a creative thinker, that’s something that I think all parents want. It’s not about turning your kid into the next Monet, it’s about giving them the tools that they need to succeed in college and beyond. Or maybe it’s about how arts education boosts learning and other things. Like, if you take music, you’re going to be better at math. People how have arts education have better graduation rates. That kind of thing. So, you know, sort of have to bring it back to why this is important for your kid. And the other thing that’s really important to understand is to sort of understand who your target is when it comes to voters. So, if you’re trying to influence a school board in Jefferson County here in Colorado, your probably most important voter is an independent white mom-- right?-- who’s going to vote in a school board general election. But, in Denver, a much more liberal place, you know, you’re talking to people that have very different priorities sometimes. And, so, you have to sort of speak to them and what matters to them. So, for instance, an example of maybe what not to do, when you’re talking to that white suburban mom in Jefferson County I think we all-- everybody in a survey would say that it’s important for there to be equal access to arts education and for lower income kids and families to have access to that. And I think we all agree that’s important. That suburban mom is never going to vote on that. Telling her that that's the
reason to support a bill for arts education you’re going to lose her. She’s got a million things to think about. She may agree to that, but when push comes to shove and somebody else is saying, “This is going to cost money, it’s going to raise your taxes or it’s going to take funding away from something else that your kids need,” that argument is just going to blow right by her. You gotta keep it to what matters to her and to her kid. So, that’s basically the few-- four or five-- best practices points that I’ve got and thank you for having me.

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